

ON THE SPECIFIC NAME OF THE COACHWHIP SNAKE.

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THE NAME commonly applied to this species is *Bascanion flagelliforme*, and as authority for this name Catesby's Natural History of Carolina has been as frequently quoted. Catesby's names antedating Linnaeus' tenth edition and, besides, not being binominal have no standing in zoological nomenclature. One subsequent to 1758 has therefore to be adopted.

Curiously enough no one seems to have supplied a true binominal name for this snake until after the beginning of the present century, the first being apparently Shaw's *Coluber flagellum*,* which is based exclusively on Catesby's, Vol. II, plate LIV, consequently the species in question, without the slightest doubt. I think it will also be found that no one applied *Coluber flagelliformis* binominally to the present species until Holbrook, in the first edition of his Herpetology (1836), adapted it from Catesby's *Anguis flagelliformis*.

The erroneous application of the specific name *flagelliformis* to our coachwhip snake is due to a misidentification of Laurenti's *Natrix flagelliformis*.† That he describes an entirely different snake will be plain from a glance at his diagnosis, which is based on "Seba II. 23, 2" as follows: "Supra caeruleo æquali, infra viridescente; capite angulato; rostro producto tetraedro; dorso utrinque linea alba ab abdomine distincto; cauda pentaedra."‡ He then adds: "var β . (Catesby Carolin. 2.47);" but Catesby's plate XLVII is not our coachwhip, being distinguished from Laurenti's diagnosis chiefly, as he says: "Colore magis caeruleo viridescente."§

It will be seen that Laurenti's snake is not the coachwhip snake, neither in its entirety nor in part.

* SHAW, Gen. Zool., III, pt. ii, p. 475 (1802).

† Synopsis Reptilium, 1768, p. 79.

‡ Above uniform blue, below greenish; head angular; snout produced, tetrahedral; back separated on either side from belly by a white line; tail pentahedral.

§ By the more greenish blue color.

The next quotation often referred to our snake is Daudin's *Coluber flagelliformis*,* but with no better reason, as it is a snake "supra late viridis, subtus albidus,"† which Daudin confounds with another of Catesby's green species, viz, pl. LVII. This is, however, the *Coluber æstivus* of Linnæus. As a matter of fact, Daudin refers Catesby's representation of the true coachwhip snake, viz, "*Anguis flagelliformis*," Catesby, Hist. nat. Carol. pl. 54," to his *Coluber filiformis* which consequently becomes in part a synonym of *Bascanion flagellum*.

* Hist. Nat. Rept., vi, 1803, p. 380.

† Above light green, below whitish.